

WI-65
Friend's Choice
Salisbury vicinity
Private

c. 1830-40

Located at the end of a cedar tree lined lane off Crooked Oak Road is a second quarter of the nineteenth-century dwelling that defines the property historically known as "Friend's Choice." The two-story, center hall frame house, estimated to date around 1830-40, was built by Purnell Johnson (1816-1866), whose ancestors had occupied the same land since the early 1720s. Identified in the 1860 United States Census for Somerset County as a forty-five year old farmer, Purnell Johnson is listed with his 20-year old wife Sarah. Purnell Johnson's estate was valued at \$10,000.

The house Purnell and Sarah Johnson occupied was designed after a traditional center hall, single-pile plan, and it was trimmed with a moderate level of well-executed Federal/Greek Revival woodwork. The mantel in the north parlor is a particularly unusual interpretation of Federal design with its diamond-shaped lozenges that distinguish the moldings that flank the firebox.

Following Purnell Johnson's death in 1866, the Friend's Choice property was occupied by his widow Sarah, son Allison, and two minor children Marietta and Margaret. In 1888 Allison Johnson acquired 258 acres of the family farm, residing there until his death around 1928. The property passed to his three daughters, Alice Johnson Hubert, Margaret E. Johnson, and Sarah Johnson Blaine. Margaret E. Johnson resided on the farm until 1981, after which the property was sold out of the family.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Friend's Choice

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-65

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture
2. Geographic Orientation: Eastern Shore
3. Chronological/Development Period(s): Agricultural-Industrial Transition
1815-1870
4. Resource Type(s): Dwelling

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-65

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Friend's Choice Purnell Johnson Farm

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Crooked Oak Lane ☐ not for publication

city, town Salisbury ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Thomas M. and Julia B. Fisher

street & number 27823 Pemberton Drive telephone no.: 410-742-4088

city, town Salisbury state and zip code MD 21801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court Map 47, P. 348
liber 981

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio 530

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

date 1970 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD 21032

7. Description

Survey No. WI-65

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The farm known as "Friend's Choice" is located on the west side of Crooked Oak Lane and on the north side of Pemberton Drive west of Salisbury, Wicomico County, Maryland. The two-story, five-bay frame house, located at the end of a cedar tree lined lane, faces east with the gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in two principal stages, the front two-story, center hall house dates to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, probably around 1830-40. Attached to the back of the main block is a two-story rear wing erected around 1880-90. Supported on a low brick foundation, the exterior is clad with aluminum siding and the medium pitched gable roofs are covered with asphalt shingles.

The east (main) elevation is an asymmetrical five-bay facade with a center double leaf door entrance. The front doorway is topped by a two-light transom. The double leaf doors are original and date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Flanking the front door are two-over-two sash windows. The first floor is sheltered by a turned post porch which wraps around the house to the south side. The second floor is lighted by a series of unevenly spaced two-over-two sash windows. Finishing the base of the roof is a boxed cornice.

The north gable end is dominated by an exterior brick chimney laid in seven-course common bond. The chimney has a corbelled base and corbelled shoulders. Four-pane windows light the attic. The gable end is finished with an extended eave and short returns at the base of the roof.

The south gable end of the main block is sheltered on the first floor by the turned column front porch. A side entrance to the right of a rebuilt chimney stack is filled with a eight-panel mid nineteenth-century door. The chimney was rebuilt during the second quarter of the twentieth century with hard-fired brick.

The west (rear) wall of the main block is largely covered by the two story, two-room plan service wing. Single flue brick stove chimneys pierce the roofline.

The first floor interior is fitted with Federal/Greek Revival woodwork. A Federal stair rises against the south wall of the hall. A square profile newel post and slender rectangular balusters support a circular profile handrail. The perimeter of the hall is trimmed with a second quarter of the nineteenth-century chair rail and a beaded baseboard. Six-panel doors framed by Greek Revival corner block surrounds provide access to the rooms on each side of the hall. The surround molding is distinguished by a recessed series of descending ridges from a high point on the backband to a low groove in the center. The corner blocks are plain.

The north and south parlors are fitted with Federal/Greek Revival woodwork and the mantels, chair rail, and baseboards remain intact. The mantel in the north parlor is particularly unusual with an unconventional diamond design that distinguishes each side. The frieze is divided into a five-part composition, and the shelf is composed of a series of early to mid nineteenth-century moldings.

8. Significance

Survey No. WI-65

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Located at the end of a cedar tree lined lane off Crooked Oak Road is a second quarter of the nineteenth-century dwelling that defines the property historically known as "Friend's Choice." The two-story, center hall frame house, estimated to date around 1830-40, was built by Purnell Johnson (1816-1866), whose ancestors had occupied the same land since the early 1720s.¹ Identified in the 1860 United States Census for Somerset County as a forty-five year old farmer, Purnell Johnson is listed with his 20-year old wife Sarah. Purnell Johnson's estate was valued at \$10,000.²

The house Purnell and Sarah Johnson occupied was designed after a traditional center hall, single-pile plan, and it was trimmed with a moderate level of well-executed Federal/Greek Revival woodwork. The mantel in the north parlor is a particularly unusual interpretation of Federal design with its diamond-shaped lozenges that distinguish the moldings that flank the firebox.

Following Purnell Johnson's death in 1866, the Friend's Choice property was occupied by his widow Sarah, son Allison, and two minor children Marietta and Margaret.³ In 1888 Allison Johnson acquired 258 acres of the family farm, residing there until his death around 1928.⁴ The property passed to his three daughters, Alice Johnson Hubert, Margaret E. Johnson, and Sarah Johnson Blaine. Margaret E. Johnson resided on the farm until 1981, after which the property was sold out of the family.

¹ Ruth T. Dryden, *Land Records of Wicomico County, 1666-1810*, Family Line Publications, 1992. p. 156.

² *Eighth Census for the United States*, 1860, Somerset County population schedule, transcribed by John C. Barnes, published by Ruth T. Dryden, 1988, p. 146.

³ Judicial Records of Wicomico County, SPT 1/328-335, Petition of Allison Johnson of Wicomico County, Maryland.

⁴ Wicomico County Land Record, FMS 3/438, April 4, 1888.

Survey No. WI-65

PS-2746

This frame house is five bays wide, 2½ stories high, with a rear ell. The house is covered with siding, and the roof with modern asphalt shingle. An exterior chimney appears in either gable end. Flanking the central entrance are four two-over-two light windows, and there are five slightly smaller two-over-two windows across the second floor. On the left end of the building, a door is to the right of the chimney, and two windows flank the chimney on the second floor. A small four light window appears beside the chimney in the attic. The roof has return cornices. The house has a wrap-around porch with balusters and turned posts.

WI-65
Friend's Choice
Salisbury vicinity, Wicomico County, Maryland
Chain of title

Map 47, Parcel 348

981/530 Margaret H. Lincoln, individually and as personal representative
of the estate of Margaret E. Johnson, Sarah J. Blaine, and Alice J.
Lincoln

to

11/30/1982 Thomas M. and Julia B. Fisher

A.L.L. 3/432 Last Will and Testament of Margaret E. Johnson
(died on or about 4/4/1981)

to

Sarah J. Blaine, Alice J. Lincoln, Margaret H. Lincoln

FMS 3/438 Jacob C. Phillips, et al. (Alonzo L. Williams, John O. Freeny,
Henry W. Anderson, George H. Taylor, Commissioners appointed
to divide the lands of Purnell Johnson

to

4/4/1888 Allison Johnson
(...the said Allison Johnson having died intestate in or about 1928,
whereupon the property descended by operation of law to his
widow Margaret H. Johnson and to his three daughters, Alice J.
Hubert, Margaret E. Johnson, and Sarah J. Blaine

"Friend's Choice" 258 acres as laid out in a plat filed in
SPT 1/328-335 in the Judicial Records of Wicomico County

Friend's Choice

Salisbury vicinity, Wicomico County, Maryland

Chain of title continued

Petition of Allison Johnson of Wicomico County, Maryland respectfully represents that a certain Purnell Johnson, late of Somerset County, departed this life in the year 1866

Children: Allison Johnson

Archeleas Johnson (died 1812)

Marietta Bell Johnson (minor)

Margaret P. Johnson (minor)

Widow: Sarah E. Johnson

Division of lands of Purnell Johnson

No. 1, Containing seventy-eight acres valued at \$10 per acre making seven hundred and eighty acres (\$780)

No. 2, Containing ninety-eight acres valued at \$17 per acre making \$1666

No. 3, Containing eighty-seven acres valued at \$23 per acre making \$2001

No. 4, Containing forty-five acres, widow's dower, \$8 per acre making \$360

Somerset County

Register of Wills

Administration Account
JP 5/63

Administration Account for Ann Dashiell

4/11/1815

Dr. Charles Dashiell, executor of Ann Dashiell

Account lists "money owed Purnell Johnson" \$ 328.33 1/3

WI-65
Friend's Choice
Salisbury vicinity
Chain of title continued

Page 3

Somerset County
Land Record
Bond JP 2/161

Ann Dashiell

to

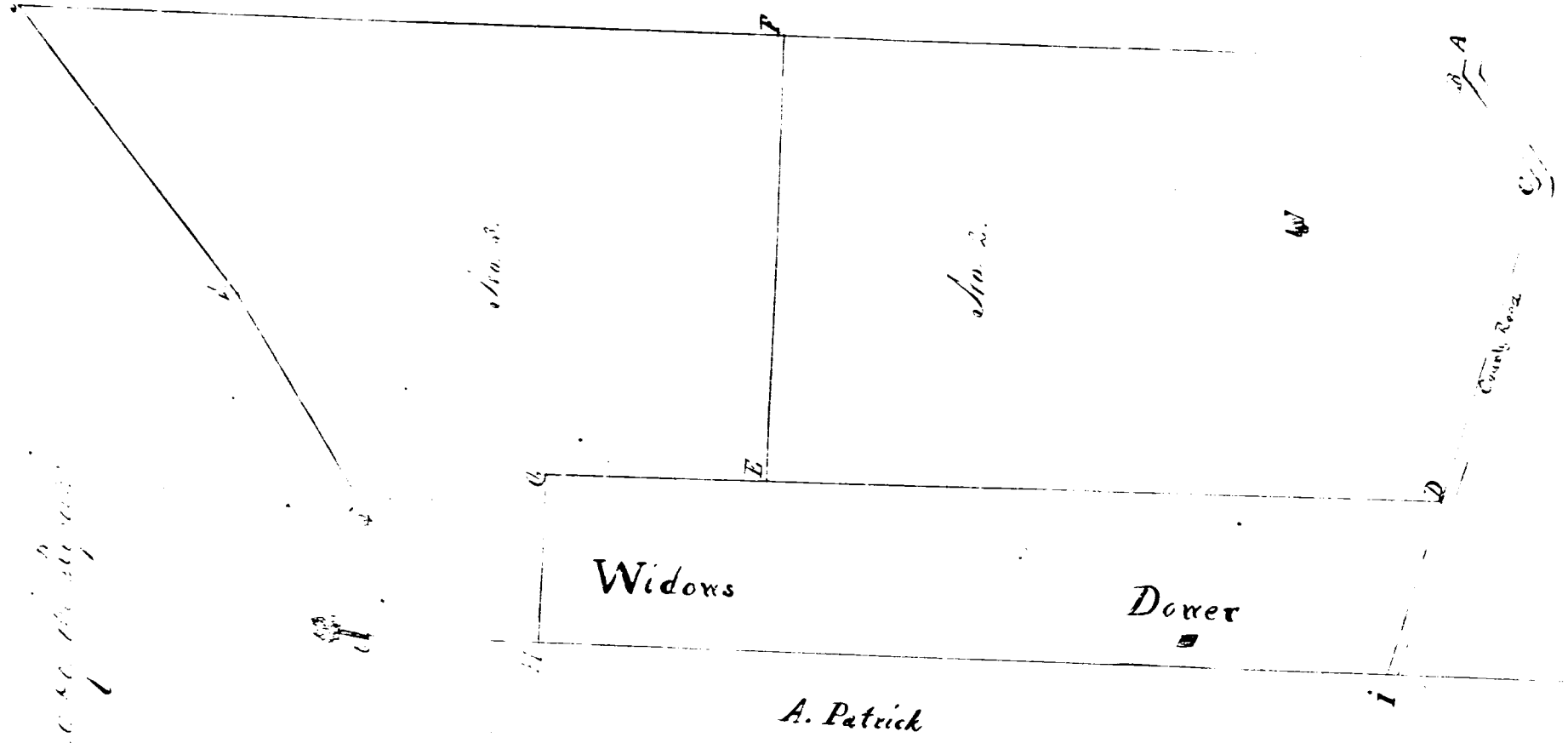
9/19/1814

Purnell Johnson

Know all men my these presents that I Ann Dashiell of Somerset County (widow of Thomas Dashiell, late of said County, dec'd) am held and firmly bound unto Purnell Johnson of Worcester County in the full and just sum of eight thousand dollars....to be paid to the said Purnell Johnson....for the whole signed with her own proper hand and her seal affixed 18 May 1813.

WI-65

Hugh Jackson



copy of the map

A

C

County Road

to 1

Widows

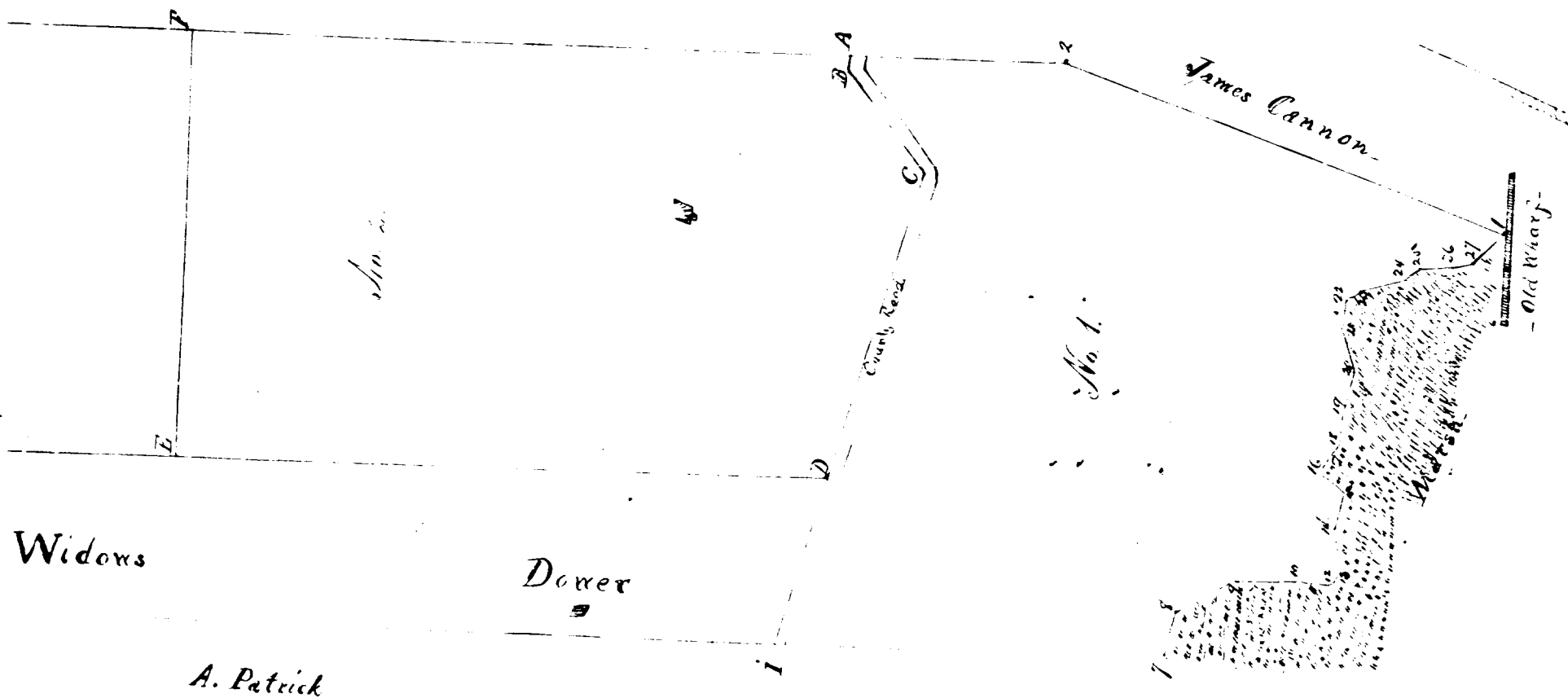
Dower

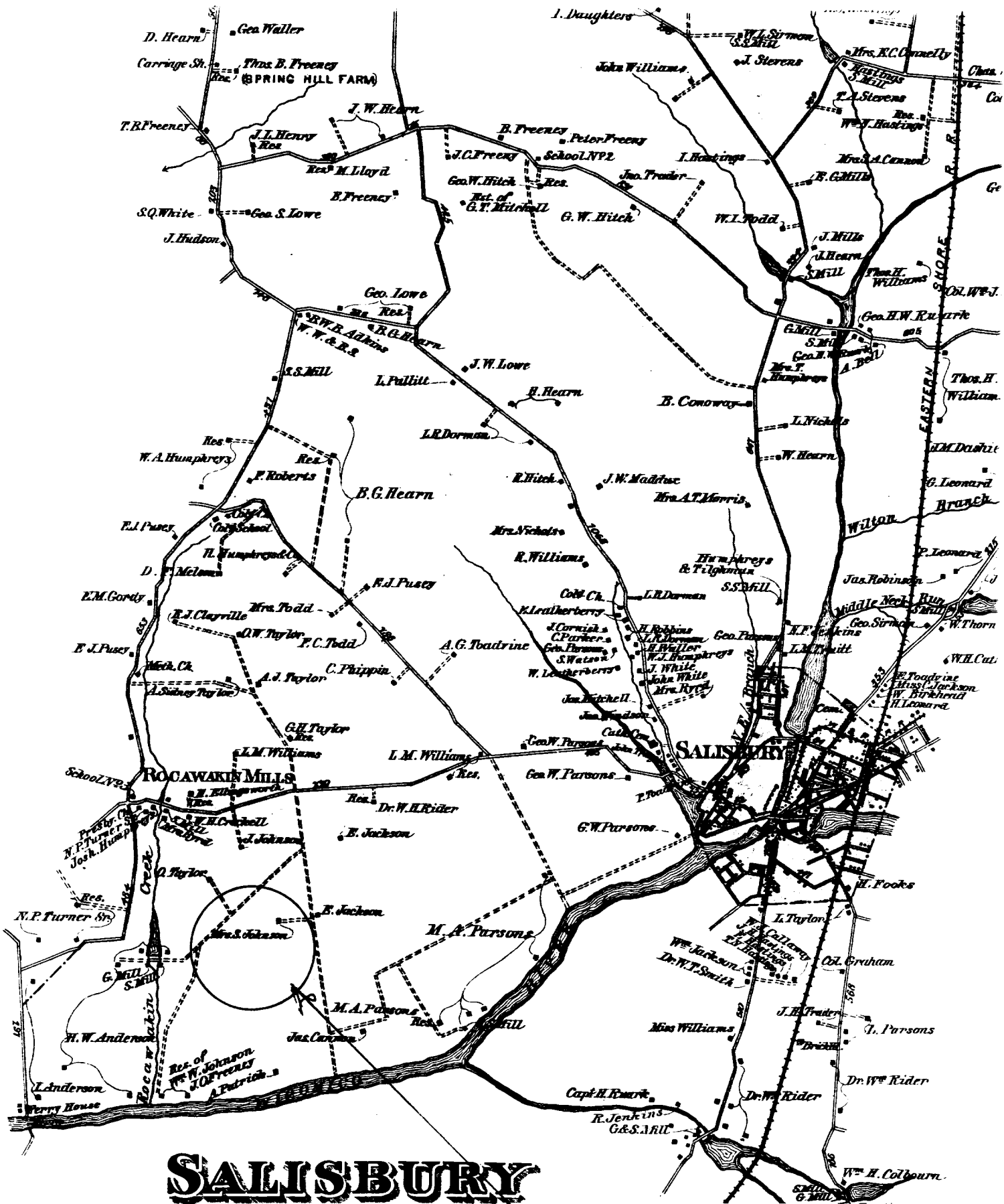
A. Patrick

i

WI-65

Hugh Jackson-





SALISBURY

Dist. No. 9
WICOMICO CO.

WI-65
Friend's Choice
Salisbury vicinity

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Altas
1877

MARYLAND
OLOGICAL SURVEY

'601
FBR

4.7 KM TO U. S. 50 '41

40' '42

EDEN QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES ORTHOPHOTOMAP (TOPO

'43 '44 1 990 000 FEET



WI-65
Friend's Choice

Eden, Maryland Quadrangle
1983









WI-65 Margaret Johnson House

1976

PHOTOGRAPH BY
O. V. WOOTTEN
323 BREWINGTON DRIVE
SALISBURY, MARYLAND

Margaret Johnson
Pemberton & Crooked Oak
W/-65